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November 10, 2009

Dear Friend,

When I first ran for Congress in 2006, I promised the people of the 24th Congressional District that I would work to reform our nation's health care system. It's been my goal to pass a bill that lowers costs for everyone who already has health insurance. At the same time, I've long recognized the need to pass a bill that provides the millions of uninsured Americans, including more than 139,000 uninsured individuals living in the 24th Congressional District, an opportunity to purchase quality, affordable health insurance.

When an attempt was made to rush a health care bill to a vote back in July, I stood up and said that we were moving too quickly and I would vote against any health care bill until I had a chance to talk face-to-face with my constituents about their health care reform priorities. Since August, I was a part of nearly 30 public forums, including 10 town hall meetings, across the district. I also held countless one-on-one meetings with health care professionals, small business owners and concerned citizens to hear their stories and to learn more about how the skyrocketing costs of health care are plaguing the finances of working families and damaging our local economy.

When I went back to Washington, I fought non-stop to change the original bill based on the needs and priorities of the people and small businesses I'm privileged to represent in Congress.

On Saturday, November 7, 2009, I voted in favor of the Affordable Healthcare for America Act (H.R. 3962), which passed the House of Representatives with bi-partisan support by a vote of 220-215. After reading the bill very carefully, my decision to support its passage was based, in part, on the inclusion of 10 vital provisions, which include:

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1. Prohibits discrimination by health insurance companies based on pre-existing conditions. No one can be denied coverage or charged outrageous rates because of past medical circumstances;

2. Allows parents to keep their children or dependents on their health insurance until the age of 27;

3. Caps annual out-of-pocket medical expenses, providing financial security for working families and small businesses;

4. Provides much needed choice, with a public health insurance option competing with private insurers, so that individuals, families and small businesses without health insurance can finally afford to buy it;

5. Closes the Medicare Part D prescription drug 'Donut Hole' and allows Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices to lower health care costs for seniors;

6. Creates competition in the private health insurance industry to lower costs for small business owners who provide health benefits for their employees, allowing them to invest in their businesses and create jobs;

7. Cuts out waste, fraud and abuse in Medicare, which according to the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) will cut the deficit by \$30 billion;

8. Creates incentives for health wellness and prevention programs, lowering health care costs for people who choose to lead healthier lifestyles;

9. Protects working families and small business owners by not taxing high-quality, private health insurance benefits; and,

10. Allows for the sale of insurance across state lines, encouraging competition that will reduce costs.

There is a lot of false information floating around about what this health care legislation does. To be clear, the health care bill I voted for will not increase the federal deficit, will not allow for taxpayer funds to be used for abortion, will not provide health benefits to illegal immigrants and will not cut Medicare benefits.

I encourage you to take some time to look at the health care reform legislation, which can be found by following the link below:



Click Here To Read H.R. 3962
The Affordable Health Care For America Act

http://docs.house.gov/rules/health/111_ahcaa.pdf



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If you wish to contact me, please do so at <http://arcuri.house.gov>. Please do NOT reply to this message.

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